THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A comprehensive scheme for establishment of Hydro-Meteorological and Flood Forecasting Network on rivers common to lndia and Bhutan is in operation to generate river flow data with a view to provide advance warning to authorities in North Bengal in the flood season. The scheme is overseen and periodically reviewed through the mechanism of Joint Expert Team, which has so far held seventeen meetings.

Further, it is now proposed to set up a Joint Team of Experts (JTE), consisting of representatives from Government of India and concerned State Governments for looking into Flood Forecasting, Prevention and Management aspect comprehensively, for which the matter has been taken up with the Royal Government of Bhutan.

Scheme to meet scarcity of water In the country

1382. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently launched a scheme to meet the acute scarcity of water in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the allocation of funds for the project;

(d) whether any time schedule has been fixed for implementation of the project; and

(e) if so, to what extent this scheme is different from other such schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (e) Swajaldhara has been launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 25.12.2002. It is community based rural drinking water supply programme implemented throughout the country.

Gram Panchayats and Blocks adopting the reforms principles will be eligible for Swajaldhara Projects and will be implemented by District Implementing Agency identified by the State Governments 10% community contribution of the estimated capital cost of the schemes (5% in case of SC/ST as per 2001 Census) will be integral part of the project. The cost of the project excluding community contribution will be fully met by Government of India. The important features of this scheme is that the rural people should feel as the owner of the Scheme. Moreover, people and their Gram Panchayat must shoulder the Operation and Maintenance responsibility of the Schemes.

In the financial year 2002-03, no separate State-wise financial allocation is made for Swajaldhara. It is demand responsive. The proposal received from the various State Governments are considered on first come basis as per the conformity with the guidelines. The project period for completion of its activities is one year.

The key elements of Swajaldhara are demand-driven and community participation approach, panchayats/communities to plan, implement, operate, maintain and manage all drinking water schemes, partial capital cost sharing by the communities upfront in cash; full ownership of drinking water assets with Gram Panchayats and full Operation and Maintenance (O&M) by the users/panchayats.